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The MINISTER'S QUARTERLY

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THE MINISTER'S QUARTERLY

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HE EDITOR'S PAGE

aptism, Confirmation and Church Membership

There is probably no subject on which the United Church has as many different pinions and practices as that of how a person becomes part of the Body of Christ. o we baptize infants or only adults? If we baptize infants do we baptize *any* infants no show up at the service on Children's Day? Is *confirmation* a word in our vocabuy? How much preparation do we require of those who seek membership in the hurch?

These and other questions have been grist for the mill of an important committee hose work is discussed by Mr. Powers' article in this issue entitled *Baptism, Confirmam and Church Membership.* This committee hopes before it is through to know what e United Church believes about these things, and, perhaps just as important, what it es about them. A few of our readers have expressed themselves on the subject in this ue. Others who have developed courses for preparation of people for Christian parentod or for Church membership, or who have information or opinions they would like share are invited to participate in the dialogue, either by corresponding with comttee members or writing to THE MINISTER'S QUARTERLY.

he Study Group

Our new department gets established in this issue. Other testimonies are invited m groups of ministers who are interested in intellectual and spiritual improvement rough gathering together for fellowship, study, discussion and prayer.

hanks for Encouraging Us

Our summer issue enjoyed an enthusiastic reader response for which we are most nteful. If any minister was beyond the reach of his mailman and missed his copy of summer MINISTER'S QUARTERLY, we have a few copies left we would be glad to d as long as they last in response to requests.

t Out the Vote!

This QUARTERLY will reach you at the height of the presidential election camgn, a time of great decision for our nation. We remind our readers that the year -'61 is also a year of great decision for the United Church of Christ as by Synods l local churches we vote on the Constitution now before us. It is of the utmost imtance that every E and R Synod and every CC local church shall vote before the ne 1, 1961, deadline, and, as usual, the pastors of our fellowship are those on whom greatest responsibility falls. This year will be long remembered in our history. May part in it be one we will be glad to recall.

BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

by EDWARD A. POWERS*

WHOSE BASIC CONCERN is the quality and nature of church membership preparation in the local church? At what age most appropriately should young people be confirmed? What is the relation between baptism and church membership? How can traditions and procedures within the Reformed, Evangelical, Christian and Congregational heritages come to enrich the life of each other? What is the relation of church membership training to the church school curriculum, to the work of Deacons and the Board of Christian Education, to adult study groups? What is the relevance of the United Church Statement of Faith to the preparation of youth and adults for church membership?

These and dozens of other questions faced the joint Christian education staffs as they discussed next steps in materials for youth and adults for confirmation and church membership. It was agreed that these issues should be faced by a committee as broadly representative as possible of the groups coming into the United Church.

This Committee on Confirmation and Church Membership began its work a year ago. Its membership includes local church pastors, representatives of lay groups, theological seminary professors in liturgics, theology and Christian education, denominational secretaries in evangelism, church and ministry and Christian education.

The committee has carefully sought to understand both the heritage and present practice of our local churches. A variety of studies has been made which have been of great help. Several facts seem clear from these:

1. The pastor is the key person in every local church as far as church membership preparation is concerned. Almost without exception, he is the teacher, the developer of curriculum, the determiner of practices and rationale, and the apologist to parents and boards for his particular approach to this crucial area of the church's life.

2. The training to prepare *youth* for full church membership is considerably more extensive than that for *adults* even though the adults come by confession of faith from a non-church background.

3. Both CC and E and R churches have as their most widely used "textbook" for youth the same book *My Confirmation* or *My Church*. The latter is an adaptation of the former.

4. For the most part, Evangelical and Reformed churches use catechisms as a basis of instruction. CC churches, almost without exception, do not.

5. The term *confirmation* is used universally in both "E" and "R" churches and in only about one-half the CC churches. A survey of a significant sample of CC pastors in 1957 indicated that 42.8% used the term confirmation in reception of youth into church membership.

6. The key theological concept in the Congregational Christian heritage for this area of church life is *the covenant*. The key Evangelical and Reformed word is *confirmation*.

The committee's work thus far has been exploratory in order to fulfill the commission for which it was created: "to examine current practices in terms of confirmation and church membership with-

*General Secretary, Division of Christian Education, Board of Home Missions; Chairman, Joint Committee to study Baptism, Confirmation, and Church Membership in the United Church of Christ.

the United Church and to develop mmon procedures which will lead to e eventual development of materials to lp pastors and churches do their job ore effectively."

Considerable time in recent meetings s been given to the meaning of con- mation and its relation to baptism and urch membership, to the covenant both the local church covenant and the venant of grace as it relates to bap- m), and to our present local church uation. Future meetings will need to me to basic agreement on the kinds of aterials needed to do the job in the cal church, and the relationship of such aterials to the United Church Curricu- m and other adult and youth study ma- ials.

HE COMMITTEE HOPES its work may d in some of the "unfinished business" the United Church in confirmation and urch membership. Out of this effort e would hope for a point of view, re- urces, and interpretative material which ould:

1. Result in more consistency and ade- acy of practice on the part of both inisters and laity.

2. Relate itself integrally to the United urch Curriculum but at the same time of use to those who do not use this rriculum.

3. Interpret the United Church State- ent of Faith as well as classic creeds.

4. Correlate with the ongoing life of e church and the homes in which both uth and adults who experience con- mation are involved.

5. Relate to the work of official bodies the local church: consistory, diaconate, ard of christian education, lay organ- tions, youth program.

6. Establish confirmation not as an end the total process of nurture but as a mmation and a new beginning.

7. Give added dignity and status to e rite of confirmation or reception into urch membership.

8. Make clear the importance of commitment to the experience of confirmation.

9. Be related to seminary teaching in the field of pastoral theology and liturgics.

10. Relate to the liturgy and sacramental usage of local churches.

PASTORS CAN HELP the committee greatly by sharing their convictions and concerns with regard to confirmation and church membership and offering samples of their locally developed materials. Such comments should be sent to the Committee on Confirmation and Church Membership; Room 805; 14 Beacon Street; Boston 8, Massachusetts.

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INFANT BAPTISM—QUAINT CUSTOM OR SOLEMN VOW?

by WILLIAM R. SHORMAN*

Who has not seen the vows repeated like lines of a play?

WHAT TAKES PLACE when an infant is baptized? Is it an act of dedication on the part of parents? a quaint custom perpetuated to keep the grandparents happy? a sentimental act that makes for a beautiful church service? an act that changes the child's relationship to God? Here are problems too often neglected by ministers and churches alike. Some ministers baptize children regardless of whether the parents are members of a church. Other ministers consent to a private service in the home. Some clergy are quite forthright in repudiating infant baptism, saying that baptism should be reserved for believers only. Then there are those who take a mixed stand in which baptism is performed, but is described as a dedicatory service on the part of parents; or introduce an element of confusion into the whole situation by listing the service in their church bulletins as a Service of Dedication, while nevertheless employing water. Some lay people think that they are doing a great service to their pastor by "drumming up trade" for him in recommending to their non-church friends that they take their baby to him for baptism.

As ministers we have too often been more interested in making the service beautiful than in making it meaningful; more concerned to keep people happy than to make them think; more concerned to use baptism as a gimmick—"this family might become more interested in the church if I baptize their child"—than as a sign of God's grace at work.

Following Elton Trueblood's interpretation of the Third Commandment, it could well be that the Church at times encourages people to take God's name in vain. This follows when people are led to invoke God's name in an act in which there is a lack of faith, of commitment, or meaning. Parents can be asked to take vows which they have no intention of keeping. Who has not seen the vows repeated like lines of a play in order to please the audience—the grandparents, neighbors, church members?

Baptism has been regarded as the sign of entrance into the Church. Some baptismal services are explicit while others imply that the child is to be reared in such a way that when he becomes older he will be led to confirm the vows taken for him and that he will join the church. How can a non-church parent promise in good faith that he will encourage his child to become a part of the church when the church means nothing to him, when he shows by his failure to support the church by his testimony—joining the church—and by his life—supporting the church with his gifts, presence, or time—that the church is a mere bit of culture but not vital to his life?

When these questions are raised, some ministers are quick to exclaim, "Well, at least it doesn't do any harm!" I would seriously contend that it does harm! Consider an analogy from the field of medicine. A quack doctor might prescribe a tonic for a T.B. patient. This tonic may be provisionally helpful, containing alcohol to stimulate the appetite and minerals and vitamins to strengthen the body. So one could say, "Well at least this medicine won't do any harm." But it could result in the death of a patient. By providing this treatment, the tuberculosis patient may be led to a feeling of false security, keeping him from seeking the medical care which he really needs. Indeed, the tonic may make him "feel good" for a while, and it may lead him to believe that he is a wise and prudent

*Pastor, First Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

n for taking it, when all the while it leading him to his death by keeping n from seeking the treatment he really ds. So with baptism. It may lead to spiritual death of a child if the par- s are thereby lulled into spiritual com- cency and feel that they have done all t is necessary for the soul of their ld.

How often have we given a tonic when drastic operation on the life of the ily was called for? Have we baptized ies, knowing that we would probably er see the parents again? We have nforced their belief that they have done ir duty as parents, so that if after all re is something to this matter of re- on, their child will be "safe in case nething should happen to him."

am not suggesting the answers to se questions. Perhaps others will do t. I would like only to outline some ctical problems which are crying out some theoretical treatment and for rkable, meaningful and honest proce- es at the parish level. This seems ibly important at a time when the ited Church is working through some the implications of our different litur- al histories. I would suggest that these estions be used at ministers' discussion etings, and that the QUARTERLY later olish their findings or results:

A woman of your church suffers a scarriage, and a baby is born weighing out a pound. While it is breathing, the ctors says that it is so underdeveloped t there is no chance for its survival. ould you—

a) suggest that the baby be baptized while there is a semblance of life,

b) baptize the baby only if the parents requested it, and then to please them?

c) not baptize the baby even if one of the parents seemed to want it?

hat should be said and done?

You receive a 'phone call at 5:30 M. A stranger says that his wife has d a premature baby and asks you to come down to the hospital to baptize it "just in case something happens." At the hospital you find the mother awake, but almost too drowsy and dopey to carry on a conversation. The parents are Protestants from a neighboring town without a pastor. The baby, while premature, has a very good chance of survival, but the parents seem concerned about its welfare in case it should die. What should be said? What should be done?

3) Some parents come to you and ask you to baptize their children. You do not know them, or at least not too well, but you discover that they were baptized as infants but were never confirmed, or they have never joined the church. They do not come to church but indicate that they might send their child to Sunday School when he gets older. What should be said? What should be done?

4) Imagine four children of four different families. In what ways do these children differ as regards their standing with God? Which children can be said to belong to the "household of faith" or the "household of God?" In which child is the grace of God at work, or if God's grace is at work in each, in which life is it more abundant, or different from the others?

a) an unbaptized child in a non-church family,

b) a baptized child in a non-church family,

c) a baptized child in a church family,

d) an unbaptized child in a church family?

5) To be consistent with the idea of children being baptized into the "household of faith," should they then be allowed to partake of communion before they are confirmed?

6) If a minister has not had his own children baptized, can he truly baptize others, or is the rite more kin to dedication? Stated in another way, can he honestly and in good faith baptize infants of others when he has deemed it right not to baptize his own?

7) Distinguish between the efficacy of—
   a) baptismal service labeled as such,
   b) dedication service in which water is used,
   c) dedication service in which no water is used and where the child may be baptized later.

8) What role does culture have to play in the validity of infant baptism? Should the attitude and practice of a minister, or church, be any different in a strong Roman Catholic or Lutheran environment than in a culture shaped by Baptist such as in the South, or in the southern mountains?

9) At what age should a child be baptized?

10) What should be the maximum age for a child to be baptized by his parents as infant baptism? (In cases where a family joins the church and has some good sized children.)

2 years? 6 years? 9 years? 12 years?

I'D LIKE MY BABY DONE

by DONALD J. MACCALLUM*

Let the parents be at least as well done as the baby.

"WELL DONE OR medium rare?" I'm
npted to reply when a well-meaning
ther asks to have her baby "done."
one" means baptized and the euphem-
n suggests a curious misconception of
ptism as a mere social custom to which,
some inexplicable reason, parents
ght to conform.

The pastor administering the sacrament
not be certain that his idea of the
emony's significance is shared by either
parents or the congregation. Likely
not, the parents are too apprehensive
out their infants' behavior and the
ngregation too charmed by the chil-
n's cuteness to give much attention to
meanings implied in the ritual.

Probably no other rite of the Church
celebrated with such meager prepara-
n and such unwarranted assumptions of
derstanding as the sacrament of bap-
n. It is not enough that the pastor
ows what is signified by his words, "I
ptize thee in the name of the Father
d of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."
s not enough, could even this be taken
granted, that the congregation senses
mystery.

If the parents do not know what is
ng done, why it is being done, and
at difference it makes, baptism will be
ained of its sacramental significance and
nain a mere social form to be followed
no better reason than that it seems
thing to do.

OW CAN OUR PEOPLE'S ignorance
out baptism be enlightened and their
ual interest in the sacrament be
nged to purposeful commitment?
ere is no one way to improve the situa-
n but a multi-pronged attack on the
problem might include the following approaches:

(1) Include in the church school curriculum instruction in the rites and sacraments of the Church. It is appalling to realize how many church schools provide "religious education" that neglects to inform children about the present ministries and practices of their own church. The church school should prepare children for responsible churchmanship. If it does not, it merely contributes to the vapid religiosity so menacing to the message of the gospel and the ministry of the Church. Interpretation of the services of the church, including baptism, cannot be overlooked by the church school if we want our children to develop the understanding and appreciation of our traditions so necessary to informed, committed churchmanship.

(2) Administer baptism less frequently and make it the central act of each service at which the sacrament is performed. Too often baptism is slipped into the worship service as an "extra added attraction" unrelated to hymns, lessons or sermon for the day. This is generally true when the sacrament is administered every few weeks as babies come along to be "done."

Baptisms on regularly but infrequently scheduled Sundays, perhaps quarterly, would allow the entire service to be so arranged as to illumine the significance of the sacrament. In short, baptism would become an Event, as it surely ought to be, and not an apparent intrusion into the customary order of worship.

(3) Use the pulpit to inform the pews. If anything can be said with certainty about today's congregations, it is that they want to be instructed from the pulpit. But ministers are so fearful of

stor, First Church, Greenfield, Mass.

violating homiletical principles or so eager to speak the last word on the latest subject that the best opportunity of the week for sound Christian education is often missed.

There is no good reason why preachers cannot use their pulpits to teach and there are many good reasons why they should. If church people do not understand the meaning of baptism, it is the preacher's job to tell them and the best time to tell them is the time allotted to the sermon on those Sundays when baptism is made The Event of the service.

(4) Require parents to attend a baptismal preparatory session. The church may not withhold the sacrament when it is requested but it is well within its rights and alert to its responsibilities to require at least a minimum of instruction for those who desire the sacrament. That minimum can be accomplished by having the parents meet as a group with the pastor, perhaps on the Sunday afternoon a week before the baptisms will take place.

The pastor will talk in some detail about baptism and its implications. Misconceptions will be corrected and questions answered. The preparatory session is also a convenient time to gather the information needed for the church records and it has the further advantage of acquainting young parents in the church with others whose children provide a bond of common interest.

These four approaches may not stop folk from telling the pastor, "I'd like my baby done." But perhaps we can better tolerate the infelicity of expression when we are assured that the parents will be at least as well done as the baby!

THE *CHRISTIAN* CHURCH AND BAPTISM

by WILLIAM T. SCOTT, SR.*

If the preacher always runs to hydraulics, whether fine spray or plunge, give me the Quaker meeting!

IF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH had any distinctive doctrine of baptism, *in theory,* it was predicated upon one of its six "Cardinal Principles"—"The right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience, a right and a privilege that should be accorded to and exercised by all." Likewise, if the Christian Church ever had a doctrine of baptism *in practice,* it was the recognition of the act as commemorating our Lord's example, a recognition rite of those professing Him as Lord and Saviour upon entering into the membership of His Church. It never took a denominational stand, but rather left the act itself and the mode to individual interpretation. All sections of the Christian Church accepted the "Cardinal Principle"—"Christian Character, or vital piety, the only and a sufficient test of Christian fellowship and Church membership."

To understand what may seem to be "no doctrine of baptism in the Christian Church," one must review the origin of the denomination and its very nature. The Christian Church grew out of three simultaneous union movements which had their origin during the latter part of the 18th century—in the South (1794), in New England (1801), in the West (1804). Reluctantly they became a denomination, for the founders were more ready to be known simply as "Christians." Uniting, as they did, segments from the newly formed Methodist Episcopal Church in the South, from the Baptists in New England, and from the Presbyterians in Kentucky, they gave wide room for private interpretation on such matters as baptism. Nevertheless, the prevailing practices of the denominations from which they stemmed—and the sentiments in the localities of the churches—no doubt greatly influenced the beliefs and practices of the Christians. Generally, the Christian Church *practiced* a "believer's baptism," but they never made baptism a dogma. Certainly, unlike the later Disciples of Christ (with whom they are often confused), and the Baptists, the Christians never made baptism, nor the mode, essential to salvation nor to church membership. Affusionists and immersionists lived in harmony and fellowship among them, and the believer with Quaker leanings was not required to submit to water baptism. Likewise, infant baptism was practiced in some areas of the church.

In the South, Rev. James O'Kelly had been one of John Wesley's lay preachers. As such he was a member of the Church of England in Virginia. Infant baptism was a part of the order of the Established Church, and O'Kelly, no doubt, used the Prayer Book of that Church. When the Methodist Episcopal Church was formed, O'Kelly became one of its first ordained ministers, and here infant baptism was practiced as heretofore. Baptism by sprinkling was generally the mode for adults though immersion was also practiced. His separation from the Methodist Church was not on account of doctrine, but church government alone.

In New England, Rev. Abner Jones and Rev. Eliam Smith were both formerly Baptists, and their belief as to mode was immersion, though, in the freedom of their fellowship as Christians, infant baptism was praticed. Water baptism was not regarded by them as a "door into the Church membership." Smith, the son of a Congregational mother, in his eighth year was forcibly baptized by sprinkling,

*Longtime Supt., Southern Convention, Present Pastor, Oakland Christian Church, Chuckatuck, Va.

and in his adult life he revolted violently from infant baptism and became an ardent proponent of believer's baptism by immersion.

In the West, Rev. Barton W. Stone was a Presbyterian who rejected Calvinism and certain other Presbyterian doctrines. But, here, as a Presbyterian he practiced infant baptism and taught the generally accepted Presbyterian doctrines of baptism. In 1838 he wrote, "I most heartily approve my course in strenuously advocating the doctrine that immersion is not the *sine qua non* of Christianity." Stone's interest in Christian unity resulted in a union with some of the "Reformers" of Alexander Campbell's movement, subsequently called the Disciples of Christ, who believed and practiced "baptismal regeneration." Though Stone found much in common with Campbell, becoming closely affiliated with his movement, his biographers confirm his stand that baptism to him was not essential to salvation, nor baptism a door into church membership.

This close connection of Stone's Kentucky movement and the Disciples of Christ with the Christian Church as it moved westward from Kentucky into Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, probably accounts for the general practice of believer's baptism by immersion in that area of the Christian Church. Nonetheless, it should be remembered that the Christian Church in the West, as elsewhere, always had among its ministers and churches those who practiced both infant baptism, and sprinkling, and those who recognized the Quaker doctrine as valid. Dr. Austin Craig, eminent western Christian Church minister, and one time President of Antioch College, counselled against making baptism a "hobby." Said he, "If the preacher always runs into hydraulics, whether fine spray or plunge, give me the Quaker meeting!"

No OFFICIAL STATEMENT regarding doctrines and usages representing the whole denomination was ever formulated, or printed, so fearful were the Christians that such a statement might become a whip to force conformity against the conviction of some. But there was one exception. In the South, the Southern Convention of the Christian Church in 1866 did what other sections of the denomination avoided. To silence their critics, they prepared and printed a document titled, "The Principles and Government of the Christian Church" in which they defined their position on baptism and other doctrinal subjects, all of which, they were careful to make clear, was to be interpreted by the individual, in the exercise of his right of private judgment. It is acknowledged that this act of clarification and enunciation contributed to the coherence and strength of the Southern Christians. In this official document it is made clear that it was merely the written form of the prevailing practices among the Christians in the area since the days of James O'Kelly. Though the Southern churches had varying points of view as to baptism, this document reveals the practice of a believer's baptism, where and when adult baptism was practiced. But they also gave place for infant baptism which was accepted as valid in adulthood.

Note the wording of the official form of ceremony for baptism which they approved in 1866, and which in only slightly modified form is used in 1960: *"The sacrament of baptism shall always be administered by an ordained minister, and it ought not to be unnecessarily delayed by any fit subject. If the subject be an adult, the minister shall say, 'In obedience to the command of my Lord and Master, and upon the profession of your faith . . . . , I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' If the subject be not an adult, omit the first two clauses (In obedience to my Lord and Master, and upon the profession of your faith) and substitute the name of the person, saying, 'I baptize thee, etc.'"*

The printed form also made it clear that as to mode, "Let each man be fully

persuaded in his own mind." In the 1960 edition of the *Manual of the Southern Convention* the following explanation is carried, "Baptism is usually administered to candidates for church membership who have not been baptized as infants."

The above quotations are given because the Southern Convention includes the largest group of former Christian churches in an area where they outnumbered the Congregationalists at the time of the 1931 union, and where possibly the position of the Christian Church more nearly prevails than elsewhere. While the other sections of the Christian Church never put into writing their position and practices as to baptism, it is believed that the position of the Southern Convention reflects the generally accepted position and practice of the whole "Christian Connection" in this regard prior to the union of the Christian Church with the Congregationalists in 1931.

Morrill, perhaps the most reliable historian of the Christian Church, in his *History of the Christian Denomination in America* wrote as to the doctrines of the Church: ". . . . Baptism (is not) regarded as a sacrament, in the sense that ritualistic churches speak of sacraments. Baptism is a simple rite signifying that a believer means to live a Christian life, and has given allegiance to Jesus Christ as his Lord and Master. It is administered to the candidate according to his preference—sprinkling, pouring, immersion. Immersion is the prevalent mode in New England and Kentucky (the West). But no form is insisted upon. (Quakers or Friends are r e c e i v e d into Christian churches without baptism at all.) This rite is not made the door to church membership; that is to say, people may be received upon confession of faith, without having been baptized."

It is believed by this writer that Dr. Morrill's appraisal remained true to the time of the union in 1931, and still prevails in many of the former Christian churches. However, it should in all fairness be stated that both the Congregational and Christian forms and interpretations may be found in these churches, also.

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

by EDWARD W. BRUESEKE*

Do those little darlings need to be cleansed from anything?

FOR THE GREATER PART of my ministry, I assumed that those who performed and those who accepted baptism knew what it meant. I did not question myself or the parents who wanted their children baptized. Except for an occasional sermon on the significance of dedicated parenthood and the meaning of baptism as a mark of identity with the community of God's people, the Church, I accepted baptism as part of the Christian tradition and practice, and gave my attention to other things. About ten years ago, however, as the postwar revival of interest in religion brought more and more unchurched people into our fellowship—many through adult baptism and then their children for "christening"—I began to have misgivings. Did these people understand what they were doing? Did the vows they took for their children have real meaning?

A New Custom

Having come from the "E" tradition of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and being by nature eager to experiment with the new only where I had a real concern, and content to leave other things as they were, I had used the old "E" order for baptism. With growing concern, I began to compare that order with the one in the Evangelical and Reformed *Book of Worship*. I discovered that the Evangelical and Reformed order included a question on which many a parent and sponsor might have to swallow hard before he could answer "I do." The more I pondered this question, the more I knew it was the heart of the matter. Thus, for me, a new "ministry" was born. From that time on, I would baptize no one, except in emergencies, without a period of instruction. Furthermore, I would decline to baptize an adult or a child if the party concerned refused to identify himself with a local church. For adolescents and adults, these instruction periods are usually part of the regular course of study. In the case of children, I try to spend about one hour in private consultation with each child's parents. This takes a great deal of time, but I have found it to be one of the most enjoyable and fruitful experiences of my ministry. What do we talk about? Let me describe a typical parents' conference.

A Typical Parents' Conference

Through our weekly newsletter, we have let the procedure be known, and so our parents call to make an appointment to see the pastor, usually in the evening. We confer in the pastor's study. After everyone is relaxed, I usually say, "Before I tell you what baptism means to me, suppose you tell me what it means to you. Just why do you want your child baptized?" Sometimes there is a long silence. Often someone immediately begins to talk about dedicating the child to God, or dedicating themselves in their gratitude for God's great gift to them in this child. In most instances, these are very young parents who have just had their first child. Once we have discussed baptism they are not required to repeat the conference as new children come along. There is no better time to discuss the meaning of baptism with parents than just after the birth of their first child when they are very much aware of the mystery and wonder of life. I start where they are and find that some parents confess quite honestly that they cannot give a single reason for seeking baptism. They are sure good reasons exist, but they don't know them. Quite often I begin by

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having them describe a baptismal service. Then I ask, "What does the use of water mean? Why do this in church?" etc. I ask them if they know how the practice of baptizing began; if they do not know, I explain. Nineteen hundred years later we may know what a custom means; yet surely it had some meaning in its origin.

I tell them that John the Baptist took a Jewish ceremony reserved for Gentiles and gave it a new emphasis; namely, that just as Gentiles who wanted to become Jews had to renounce their Gentile world and be ritually cleansed from the corrupting influences of pagan culture, so Jews as well as Gentiles needed to repent of their sins and be cleansed by the grace of God. I explain that ever since, for Christians, baptism has had something to do with cleansing—a recognition of man's deep involvement in sin and his need for the redeeming grace of God.

Following this I point out that when Jesus heard John preach and saw him baptize, although of all people Jesus would seem to need what was symbolized by baptism least, he went to John and asked to be baptized. I take his act to mean, "John is right: this is the need of every man. I take my stand with him." In this way baptism became a mark of identity; even as it identified Jesus with John, so it identifies the Christian with Jesus. But there is no magic here. The identity is the identity of a personal relationship, and for the Christian it is an identification with a community, "the body of Christ," the Church. Baptism, however, is not merely a mark of identity on the level of the naturalization ceremony for foreign-born citizens. Baptism is the door through which we enter "the body of Christ"—the Christian community. This is why some churches have the baptismal font not in the nave of the church but near the entrance—at the door.

Depending on the way our conversation develops, we may spend some time with the New Testament idea of baptism as a symbol of dying and being buried with Christ, most effectively symbolized by immersion, and rising with him again, coming up out of the water. We usually confine this idea—dying to the old life and rising to the new—to adult discussion of baptism or a formal presentation in a sermon. The same policy is followed concerning the controversy between infant baptism and adult immersion.

Original Sin

One big objection raised repeatedly in talking with parents of young children concerns Original Sin. Do these little darlings need to be cleansed from anything? Are they in any way involved in sin? Parents are ready to admit that just to be born into this evil world is to be involved in sin and that even when he is very young their child is going to learn a lot of evil things from other children as well as from adults. In what sense, if any, is he a sinner? I reply by attempting to define sin. I explain that the starting point of all sin is idolatry, rebellion against God, the sin of playing God and wanting to have our own way, as if we are the center of the universe and no one else matters. All parents I have counseled admit that their child has a will of his own to "play God" in acting as if he must have attention just because he wants attention. He shares, with all other human beings, this drive toward self-centeredness. He will always be in danger of slipping into idolatry and becoming self-willed, self-centered and irresponsible. For these reasons, responsible Christian parents—responsive and responsible to God—will want the cleansing, healing, refreshing, redeeming grace of God to flow into their child's life from the very first; and to this end they will dedicate themselves as channels through which this cleansing grace may do its work.

The Vows

But what is demanded in the baptismal vows? The very first question in the Evangelical and Reformed order is the difficult one. It reads, "Do you renounce the vain pomp and glory of the world, the lust of the flesh, and all evil works and ways?" This, as I said, goes to the heart of the matter. It points to truths the Christian dares not dodge. The world—especially our modern culture—will settle for appearances. Does a man look good? important? big? successful? Much of the time we go about pretending to be what we are not—good, wise, generous, forgiving, brave, unafraid or whatever it may be. The Church, the body or community of which Christ is the head, places a premium upon genuineness, and condemns pretense. Christ tells us that God prefers an honest sinner to a hypocritical saint. Vanity and pomp are tempting substitutes for reality and like more obvious temptations must be renounced by the Christian. Because this sixteenth century language may still not be too clear to parents, we add to this question a more positive note: "Do you promise with the help of God to live a responsible Christian life, and above all to strive to be both genuine and humble?" This vow of the parents is extremely important for their child. If they really mean what they say, they will seek to become increasingly genuine persons. Pretension and deceit will recede from their lives, and their child will have a better chance to become a genuine Christian. Children still learn primarily by imitating their parents.

Once this first hurdle is passed, the other vows are relatively easy. "Do you sincerely desire that this child be baptized into this Christian faith?" (Of course they do. That is why they are here in the first place.) "Do you promise to instruct this child in the Word of God and by precept and example bring him up into the nurture and admonition of the Lord?" Here we explain that the major responsibility for teaching the child will always lie with the parents. To help them, the Church provides a book service. We have books to lend or sell, books on every level and all related subjects—prayer books, study books, children's books, books on sex education for the adolescent, etc. To help our parents teach their children, the Church has specific tools always ready to put into their hands.

The final question is: "Do you promise to bring this child into the House of God, and to see to it that in due time he be instructed and prepared for Confirmation and the Holy Communion?" One couple went to another church to have their boy baptized because of this question. They didn't belong to any church and did not contemplate uniting with one. They had been baptized as children but for some years had not had any active relationship with the church nor would they promise to effect t h i s relationship now. They didn't want the burden of church membership and all that it implied. When I tried to explain to them that they could not take the responsibility of leading this child into the company of Christ unless they promised to become a part of that body themselves, they just did not know what I was talking about. To meet them half way, I proposed that a grandmother —a faithful member of the Church—be chosen as the child's godmother; at the baptism, the promises made by the grandmother would be accepted as valid, while the parents would be there as witnesses to this baptism. They agreed to think it over but on the date tentatively set for the baptism, they didn't appear.

Meaningful baptism? In our parents' conferences we by no means exhaust the meaning of Baptism. But responsible Christian parents are grateful for an opportunity to know and understand. Over and over again I have been told that this kind of preparatory discussion makes the whole baptismal service very meaningful.

SHOULD SERMONS HAVE "HAPPY ENDINGS"?

by JOHN R. SCOTFORD*

There is evidence that the tired business man gets more uplift for his spirit from prophetic preaching than from "comfortable words."

AN UNDUE OBSESSION with immediate results plagues many a preacher. The evangelist is out for "decisions." The theologian strives to prove some point. The social gospeller cannot quit without proposing some blue print for progress. The pastoral psychologist labors to solve somebody's personal problem. All this, and heaven too, must be encompassed in less than thirty minutes.

As a result many sermons end with platitudes, if not banalities. In some churches the only proper conclusion is a plea to "give your heart to Jesus." (Reinhold Niebuhr recently observed that this can be achieved without becoming color-blind!) After a penetrating analysis of the deplorable ways in which we dominate one another the preacher proposed as a solution that "we bring God into the situation." During the darkest days of the nineteen-thirties we were told on Sunday morning, "If we would only be Christian, there would be no Depression." Many a good sermon limps awkwardly during the final three minutes as the preacher tries to close on a note of radiant hope, assuring the people that some day there will be "a happy issue out of all our afflictions."

The Bible affords scant grounds for such preaching. It is exceedingly chary of happy endings. It is true that Noah got back on dry land, Joseph gave Horatio Alger a pattern for his tales, the Israelites finally crossed over into the Promised Land, the temple was rebuilt, and Paul got to Rome, but it is never suggested that these exploits ushered in periods of peace and prosperity. On the other hand we are not told how Gomer responded to Hosea's redeeming love, what effect Job's sufferings had upon his declining years, how successfully the Prodigal adjusted to the old home situation, or what the multitude who were converted at Pentecost actually did about it. The Bible is graphic in its portrayal of human situations, rugged in its proclamation of principles, but cautious about practical solutions. It does not profess to know all the answers.

Two considerations impel preachers to give their sermons happy endings.

The people in the pews are pictured as weary, distraught, troubled by the vagaries of the rising generation, the burden of taxes, the prospect of worse wars yet to come, the ills of the flesh, the approach of death. They are supposed to be hungry sheep wistfully looking up to the pulpit for some sort of food. The least the preacher can do is to offer some escape from their woes. But the congregation is not composed entirely of people living lives of quiet desperation. Some come to church with the attitude of a well-fed dog who wants its head patted before it curls up for a nap. And both those who hunger and thirst for a ray of hope and those who are satiated with prosperity have heard the pat answers to their problems many times before, and do not take them too seriously. They regard the preacher as a professional optimist earning his pay with cheery words.

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Ministers also assume that any hesitancy in producing solutions for all the problems of mankind may suggest to the lay people that either their personal training has been inadequate or there is something wrong with the gospel which they profess. Preachers, like editors, are assumed to be omniscient. At this point they probably deceive themselves more than they do others. Physicians are finding it wise to admit more freely what they do not know. Preachers commend themselves to the more thoughtful of their listeners as they admit that their knowledge is limited and that they are not free from doubts themselves. The happy endings which they attach to their sermons are not as convincing as they assume.

WHAT PEOPLE REALLY WANT from the pulpit is not so much the promise of pie in the sky bye and bye as the courage to face the realities of tomorrow. Winston Churchill demonstrated this principle superbly during the darkest days of the war. He did not talk about victory but blood, sweat, and tears. He electrified the English people by summoning them to fight the invader from the beaches to the housetops. By facing the situation at its worst he awakened new courage.

Dr. Andrew C. Zenos of beloved memory once stated a sound principle: "Preachers worry too much about the application of their sermons. Their business is to proclaim the gospel. If the people hear and understand, the truth can then take care of itself."

Today we need what might be described as "open end" preaching.

The pulpit should face life without any blinkers. It should portray man both in his degradation and sin and in his exaltation and glory. It should cast a critical eye on all human institutions, including the church. It should make the people who sit in the pews intensely conscious of the world about them. Preaching should be an antidote for the deceptive glitter of advertising and the empty platitudes which assail us from the air. It should be an exercise in penetrating realism.

The preacher should be equally honest in his use of the Bible. He should set forth the truth which it contains without apology, without varnish, without dilution. He should not claim more for it than it claims for itself. His mission is to lead his listeners to see, feel, and understand the life and the teachings which it portrays.

With such an approach the working out of systems, the proving of particular truths, the formulation of "applications" is an impertinance rather than a help. The Bible does not bother about consistency, and neither should the preacher. Life is a riddle with no quick solutions. If we live long enough we learn that contradictories are often true, and that black and white get curiously mixed up. Why should not sermons end with question marks rather than Q.E.D.s? Why should not the preacher state his doubts as well as his convictions? Settling problems for other people is a doubtful service to them. What does them good is having real problems dumped on them.

OPEN END PREACHING can accomplish several desirable ends.

It can shock people awake. It can bring ivory towers down to earth. It can shove people into the present century. It can introduce parents to the world of their children. Many congregations need just this. Like a cold shower, it can be painful to begin with but may in the end prove exhilarating.

It can inspire people to think. The way many churchgoers take their religion on authority is sad. It has never occurred to them that they have been given brains which should be applied to the deeper problems of life. But if we really face the world about us and the principles of the Christian faith we cannot help but think.

It will lead people to accept responsibility. Too often the preacher has told them what they "ought" to do, with what might be called a reluctant result. Yet

when men and women really face human need there is no way in which they can escape from doing something about it. The same principle holds for the teachings of the Bible and of Christ. We may dodge them, but we cannot deny them.

Candid, honest preaching will generate much more courage than the sugar coated variety. We instinctively know when either we or the preacher is whistling to keep his courage up. At some time in our lives we have been compelled to face sickness, sorrow, defeat and have discovered the calm assurance which is given to us when we accept the worst that there is before us. The truly inspiring preacher is not the happy exponent of positive living as the path to prosperity but the vigorous soul who admits that the odds are against him and then plunges into the fray. There is evidence that the tired business man gets more uplift for his spirit from prophetic preaching than from "comfortable words."

But there is really nothing new about open end preaching. The Bible is full of it.

PROCLAMATION TO THE SHEPHERDS

(from RILKE)

LOOK UP, YOU MEN there at the fire, men
Aware how wide is the extent of heaven,
Astrologers even! Discover me; I am
A new star rising, all of my substance burning
And shining, my light so strong, so fearfully
strong
That the heaven of heavens cannot contain
All of it. Do let my radiance shine
Into your existence. What blind eyes,
Dark understandings, hopeless destinies
I find here! Shepherds, far and wide
My wings extend within your emptiness.
Do not be frightened at the breadfruit tree's
Casting a shadow, the shadow of my brightness.
Still, if you could only fear, if you could
know
How now upon your upturned, vacant foreheads
The future shines! In this blinding light
Much will yet happen. To you I confide it,
You being here obscure, to you true believers
Narrate the whole,
By lightning and rain, by the files of passing
birds,
By the varying wind, or by whatever will
Not overwhelm you, fill you with conceit.
Yet you will hardly hold these things inside
Of yourselves for torment. They will surely
stream
Through you like your food to keep earth green,
Much as the ecstasy an angel feels
Flows out in grace. And if a burning bush
Dazzzled your eyes, with Eternity shouting
From out of it, or if cherubim for a while
Walked here beside you, calling as you call
sheep,
Devoid of awe you would fall upon your faces,
Name this the earth, and name earth's many races.

But that is over. New things I proclaim,
From which earth's circle shall round ever wider.
What is a burning bush to us? God reaches into
A maiden's womb. I am the outward shining
Of her inward grace, I lead you to its meaning.

—Translated by KELLY JANES
Monterey, Mass.

THE PROBLEM OF COMMUNICATION

by JOHN ROSSEL

Jesus was brief, . . . clear, . . . simple. And people never forgot his message.

THE CHIEF PROBLEM faced by Protestant ministers today is the same problem faced by the artist since the dawn of creative thought—that of *communication.* They have great ideas, many of them, lofty ideals which they seek to bring to the people. They are fairly bursting with words of wisdom which would lead church members over ever new horizons. But most of them fail miserably because they have not learned the art of communication. Church attendance remains at about thirty-five per cent of the membership, and part of the blame must certainly lie at the minister's door step.

Here is a brilliant clergyman, top man in his seminary class. He is recognized by his colleagues as a thinker and a scholar. Religious magazines carry regular articles from his pen. But for some reason he can never get his message across to the people he serves. He has it in his head, perhaps even in his heart, but there is an impenetrable wall between himself and his people. He tries earnestly, he prays devoutly, but the wall remains, and the people turn away in sorrow. He is an intellectual giant, but he is a failure as a preacher.

Here is another minister, second from the bottom in his seminary class, and now preaching to a small country church. There is a burning message in his heart, and he yearns to make it known to his people. But he has never graduated from the kindergarten class so far as his theology is concerned. He refuses to read books and magazines which might challenge his thinking. He dispenses spiritual pap which even the eighth graders find impalatable. Cliches, worn illustrations, tired stories pour from his lips in unending stream while the people drowse in their seats. It takes more than a burning message in the heart to make a great preacher.

Obviously both ministers are falling short of their calling. They are doing some good in the world, but they are not realizing their full potentialities. Their problem is communication. A careful study of thousands of sermons today leads me to believe most preachers fall loosely into one of these categories.

Communication is a difficult word to define, but it has to do with establishing a direct line from head to head and from heart to heart. It doesn't do a minister much good to have a great message either in his head or heart if he cannot make it vivid to the people. Certainly it does not do the people much good. The ministers described above are sincere; we give them credit for that. Both try hard, but they fail. They simply do not understand the problem of communication as practiced by the artists of the world. They not only do not know the answers; they don't even know the questions. Many artists fail too, but a ruthless society lands on them and they disappear from view. But the futile minister continues to burden the congregation Sunday after Sunday because there is no available substitute to take his place.

I should like to consider then some of the problems of communication peculiar to the minister, and link these with the techniques practiced by the poet and the dramatist. Perhaps something of a revolution can be brought about which will free the minister from the shackles of failure, and give his church members something vital to think about.

1. First and most important of all, the Minister must believe that he is the instrument through which God speaks to the modern world.

He has no message of his own, no words which are his. Always he speaks

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for God. He is God's man, or he is nothing. Realization of this will solve dramatically some of the problems of communication between preacher and people. He has a burning message in his heart, yes, but there is more. He believes with all his heart he is God's messenger, and somehow the people become aware of this idea. I have heard many an untrained and inexperienced preacher deliver a tremendously effective sermon because he was sure he spoke for God. He could have done a better job with training and experience, but like Mary, he chose the more important part.

Too many ministers use the paste-pot method of sermon preparation. Lacking brilliance and originality themselves, they borrow freely from those who have. Comes nine o'clock on a Tuesday morning, they lock the door to the study and ask not to be disturbed. They surround themselves with: (1) a book of snappy sermon starters, (2) Bartlett's *Quotations,* (3) a Treasury of Inspiration, (4) A Treasury of the Kingdom, and (5) a small commentary. If they have a copy of Fosdick handy, they are ready to begin their work.

Not once do they ask: "Is this the Word of God? Is this what God wants me to preach this Sunday? Did I wait upon the Lord that my strength might be renewed? Did the still small voice speak to me?"

The paste-pot, assembly line technique of sermon preparation is doomed from the start and deserves to be. Because such sermons are gathered together like a crazy-quilt, that is exactly the way they sound to the people. Small wonder they become confused and indifferent.

The classic example for all ministers has been established by the prophets of the Old Testament. Over and over they used the words: *"Thus Saith the Lord."* These words prefaced every paragraph and sometimes every sentence. They were at the beginning of all exhortations. So sincerely did the prophets believe they were speaking for God, the people believed also. The problem of communication was solved because they *were* speaking for God.

This then is basic to communication. The minister is God's man or he is nothing. He speaks for God, or he had better remain quiet. He is the instrument through which God reveals himself to the modern world, or he is not a minister. Realization of this will enable him to break through many barriers. He may not have a wide choice of words or a ready wit; but he can be a competent servant of the Lord.

2. Following closely on this, the minister should base his sermons firmly on the Scriptures. Should every sermon be simply exegesis, or is there opportunity for wandering afield on the part of the minister?

Ministers tend to fall into extremes. Either they stick so closely to the text that people fail to see how the Bible speaks to modern problems. Or they wander so far afield that the problems with which they deal are not related to Bible Truths.

The solution to the problem must rest on a firm understanding as to what the Bible is and does. The Bible is the word of God; this we believe. God revealed himself to a certain people at a certain time in history. The Bible is the repository of this revelation.

I have never believed that the Bible was a closed book. I believe God continues to reveal himself to people if they will only open their heads and their hearts to him. If the minister is God's man, revelation will be in his sermons.

The amazing Truth is this: The Bible has a message for all. And it may not be the same message for any two people. I have preached many a sermon from the Bible, and received diverse responses from many people. In fact, some people have gleaned truths from my sermons I did not know were there, simply because I let the Bible speak to them.

There are limitations to exegetical preaching, to be sure, but the solution to

the problem of communication is clear: *Let the Bible speak,* and you cannot go far wrong.

3. Thirdly the minister must speak a language familiar to his people, or he will fail utterly in his task. He uses words the people understand, and illustrations which are reasonably familiar. To the farmers, he speaks of seed-time and harvest; to business men, the pearl of great price. To Americans, the ideals of freedom; to the English, the importance of tradition.

Obviously, the minister has many different people in each gathering, and he may not reach them all with his every word. But it is his solemn responsibility to know his people, their problems, their ideas and ideals, their hopes and dreams. Unless he does, he cannot reach their hearts.

This requires daily contact with his people. Visiting in their homes, laughing and weeping with them. He rejoices over the birth of a son, weeps over the death of a father. He knows a wife's secret burden, a husband's cherished ambition. He is a man of the people, and therefore can speak to the people.

All too many ministers build walls around themselves; protect themselves by hard-boiled secretaries, closed doors, and rigid time schedules. They do this in the name of meditation, study, and private devotions—and to the degree these are exercised, ministers are justified.

But the time a man needs to speak to his minister is when the burden is heaviest. He cannot wait; he may break beneath the strain. A minister who sets up an appointment for ten o'clock the next day may conduct a funeral instead. If a minister has to choose between more time with his people, and more time in sermon preparation, he had better choose the people. What he may lack in polish he will make up in understanding.

Jesus provides the supreme example of plain speech. He is fond of words of one syllable; his parables are full of images familiar to the groups addressed. He was not interested in impressing people with his wit and wisdom. He was interested only that the Word of God reach the people to whom he spoke. He was brief, he was clear, he was simple. And people never forgot his message.

4. The minister must care deeply for the people he serves. This breaks down all manner of barriers between pastor and people so far as communication is concerned.

He loves them with a Christ-like love; his only desire is to help them when and where they need help most. He says to himself over and over again: "I love them and I want to help them." This is the theme of his career. His words are translated into effective action.

Isaiah gives us a clear portrait of The Good Shepherd in the familiar passage quoted by Jesus, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath annointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." (Isaiah 61: 1-3) (Luke 4: 18-19)

Here is a man who got into the ministry because he thought it an easy way to make a living, and the profession carried with it a certain prestige in the community. Then the burdens of the ministry began to weigh upon him. The problems of administration, money-raising, pastoral calling, inter-departmental disputes. Instead of responding like a champion, he decides nothing can be done. He begins to sleep later in the morning, preach warmed-over sermons, and is a l r e a d y thinking of retirement at the age of thirty-five.

People can and do spot such an attitude instantly, and the minister's usefulness —minimal to begin with—comes to an abrupt end. By his every word and deed he is telling his congregation he cares little what happens to them, and simply cannot be bothered with most of their problems. He cannot communicate with his people because he does not care.

Here is another minister who started out with high idealism, but soon discovered that many sincere Christians have feet of clay. In spite of well-prepared sermons, seeds fall on barren ground. Church people are still people, possessed of traces of stinginess, laziness and indifference. They are not tactful in dealing with their minister nor are they concerned with his welfare.

So he gives up. Not literally; the ministry is the only profession for which he is prepared. But the fire is gone; the enthusiasm, the excitment.

Both ministers have problems of personal orientation as well as communication. Unless a pastor has a deep concern for the people he serves which transcends all the bitter trials of the day, he cannot serve them. Unless he is truly a suffering servant; unless he is willing to lay down his life for his people, he cannot communicate to them the love of God. He is spiritually sterile.

Here is a third minister who may lack much in education and experience. He may be the garden variety one-talent minister. But from his first day in the pulpit, he tells his people: 'I love you; I want to help you.'

This minister has no problem of communication. His message shines f r o m every word he speaks, whether in the pulpit, along the street, or in the home. He radiates the love of Christ. He radiates God's mercy and forgiveness. He is truly the shepherd of the sheep, and he will lead his people to the green pastures in spite of earthly handicaps.

Never mistake; people can feel instantly the attitude of the minister toward his high calling, and toward them. If the deep yearning is not there he will never be able to communicate with them or speak for God. The minister must have an honest affection for his people if he aspires to be their pastor in truth.

5. Our final point relates to the minister as craftsman. Here he learns an important lesson from the artist. We use the dramatist to illustrate our point; we could just as easily use the poet, the novelist, or the essayist.

The dramatist is a trained and experienced craftsman. He studies the art of communication because this is basic to his profession. He becomes involved with all manner of productions. He absorbs the folk-lore of the profession, as well as the undying principles. He makes small beginnings and fails, but he tries again. He watches and listens. The public is not only fickle but merciless. He would no more appear on Broadway with less than his best than he would attempt a flight to the moon without the best. Critics and customers alike would demolish him.

But many ministers seem to feel they can wander into the pulpit with a few shop-worn illustrations, a few half-baked ideas and get away with it. Their tragedy is that many times they can—get away with it, I mean. People are not very demanding of their minister, and if he is a 'nice fellow' they let him stay on.

Craftsmanship is the added extra which makes a great minister of a good one. Here are two ministers with the same talent, the same training. But one moves steadily ahead because he has conscientiously applied himself to the problem of craftsmanship. Like the dramatist, he goes to the best schools. He reads the latest books. He follows the discoveries of other professions. He makes small beginnings and fails, but he tries again. He watches and listens.

His sermon has a prologue or introduction. He introduces the 'plot' of his sermon early. His illustrations are apt and pertinent; they are never used because they are clever or might get a chuckle from the people. He reaches the climax

at which time his message burns into the hearts of his listeners. He delivers his charge to the people, and then he sits down. He knows he is through, the congregation knows he is through. To add even one sentence would be a violation of craftsmanship.

Craftsmanship can be learned, but first, the minister must believe it is important. This is the difference between a good minister and a great one; between success and failure.

PREACHING IS AT THE SAME TIME the most ancient and the most modern method of communication. At its best it is communication of God's gospel to God's people. At its worst it is a dull recitation of archaic platitudes. The five requirements of good pastoral communication here set forth are offered for the good of the order. With time, patience, hard work, and sincerity of purpose any minister can be a good preacher. Without these ingredients none can be a great one.

FAREWELL TO A MEETINGHOUSE

For year on year until one hundred sixty two be counted out
The winters have piled their snows upon the town
To match the whiteness of her clapboards;
And full as many times—save one—her whiteness
Has outlasted theirs. Alone she has gleamed pure
Amid spring's burgeoning and summer's full-growth;
Nor could autumn's flames entice her to a temporal gaiety,
She the guardian of eternity amid the change of years.

But now she melts into the past of memory.
Before the hammer's swing she goes, whom wind and storm
Could not subdue, nor weight of years bend low.
What pride and scorn, indifferent men and thoughtless souls
Could not achieve lies done.
And by the cemetery fence a new dug grave awaits;
Where once she stood erect,
Nothing stands.

But God, who out of nothing
From utter nothing once
Wrought entire worlds,
Still can refashion, restore, renew.

—VICTOR FORD
Newington, Conn.

THE STUDY GROUP

In the last issue of THE MINISTER'S QUARTERLY *we promised to tell you about experiments in small group study that have developed on their own across the country. To start us off we solicited a report from a group in the Detroit area. With this story by Glenn E. Bauman of Midland, Michigan and one by Lawrence J. Rezash of Buffalo, N. Y., submitted in response to our announcement in the last issue, we launch our new department—**THE STUDY GROUP.***

DETROIT AREA STUDY GROUP

A MINISTERS' STUDY GROUP in Michigan, still in its formative stages, has met three times since last February. Many ministers expressed an interest and need for this kind of group but nothing happened until the President of Synod encouraged one of the ministers to extend an invitation. An invitation was sent out to some seventy ministers living within a radius of about one hundred miles of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Some 35 ministers responded by indicating an interest in this kind of study group. In the three sessions which have been held the average attendance has been about 16 with 24 different ministers participating.

The group has been meeting from 10:00 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. once every two months except for July and August. Each member has been requested to read a certain book as background and as source material for the day's discussion. To date the group has used Daniel Jenkins' book *The Strangeness of the Church* and Elmer J. F. Arndt's book *The Faith We Proclaim* as the basis for discussion. In September, the group will be using Archibald MacLeish's contemporary play *J.B.* and in November the discussion will center around D. M. Baillie's book *God Was In Christ.* It is the desire of the group that our discussions encourage the participants in the discipline of reading which so often is neglected in the pastorate. The members of the group feel a need to keep abreast of current theological issues. No rigid time schedule is enforced but the discussion is permitted to move freely and easily.

While the invitation to the group was originally sent to Evangelical and Reformed ministers, it has been most stimulating to have at least one Congregational Christian minister share in our discussions. There is a real feeling of need among the ministers to reaffirm, to reconsider and to reinterpret historical and systematic theology if it is to be made meaningful for the contemporary world in which we minister. The group is extremely informal with one person acting as temporary chairman, and discussion is open to all who desire to participate.

Ministers who have participated in this group study to date are: Armin Bizer, Gene Becker, Richard Crusius, Paul Gerhart, Walter Hotz, Henry G. Kroehler, Ralph Kuether, Ernest Klaudt, Herbert R. Lowe, Theophil W. Menzel, G. Van Parker, Arlie Porter, Paul Schnake, Orville Schroer, T. R. Schmale, Carl H. Schultz, I. Kenneth Shreiner, Leonard F. Weigel, Jack Yates and Fred H. Kalkbrenner.

BUFFALO AREA STUDY GROUP

THE BUFFALO GROUP is composed of five Evangelical and Reformed ministers and one Community Church clergyman. We meet every Monday morning at 10:00 A.M. during the fall, winter, and spring seasons. The study group concludes at 12 Noon. This past year we opened with a brief coffee fellowship and then the whole morning was spent studying Paul's Letter to the Romans. We took turns in opening with prayer and leading the discussion on the basis of our personal reading and meditation on the text. We, the group, then shared our comments and thoughts out of our individual reading, meditation, and pastoral ministry. It has drawn us all together in the South Towns of Buffalo and I believe it has helped us to perform a better ministry.

Ministers who have participated in this group study are: John Schauer, Roger Horton, Ralph Marsden, P. W. Meisenheimer, Richard Whitney, and Lawrence Rezash.

We appreciate these first two reports and we know that there must be much more STUDY GROUP *experience going on, all across the United Church. Let us hear from more of you. The story you tell may be just the spark it takes to get another group started! Address your reports to* **The Study Group** *in care of* THE MINISTER'S QUARTERLY.

THE DEPTH OF EXISTENCE

by ALFRED W. SWAN*

Religious experience is not merely that the self lays hold on something but that something has grasped the self and shaken it.

IT SHOULD COME as no surprise to anyone acquainted with the Bible and with the contemporary tides of religious thought that the story of Jacob is one of the great "existentialist" stories in Scripture. For the essence of *existentialism,* of which we hear much these days, is the rediscovery of the within-ness as over against the without-ness of life, of which we have perhaps had overmuch in a period that has laid its emphasis on objectivity. A text for much of existentialism might well be taken from Jacob's struggle. "And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." (Genesis 32:34)

Jacob was discovering who and what he was within. He had a lot to reckon with in his past and a lot to be dedicated to in his future. He rid himself for a moment of all his things: his flocks and his possessions, his servants and his wives. And he was alone. And what he wrestled with that night was the man within himself, the person whom he had never fully confronted before, and with whom now he knew he must reach an understanding if he was to have any peace of mind within and any usefulness of career without.

It was a mighty struggle. But it made a new man of Jacob. He discovered not only how wrong he had been, but also how strong he could be, possessed of now limited physical powers but of tested spiritual powers to meet the new day in the land which the Lord God was to give him and those who were to come after him. He could even confront his long estranged brother and effect a reconciliation. Perhaps it was good he could not foresee all the future—the strivings between his sons, the loss for a time of Joseph and Benjamin, and the famine that was to lead him and the children of Israel into Egypt for four hundred years. Yet God was with him in it all, for he had found himself—that true self through which God desired to work his purpose out. This was the depth of his experience, and this is the depth of all existence for the human spirit.

This is good introduction to what we are always in some form wrestling with, and with which I propose we attempt to come to grips, in terms consonant with the thinking of our age and the spiritual struggle of our time.

Who am I? What am I? What are you? Who are you? What are we? Who are we? And even: whence are we? and whither bound?

These are central to a kind of thinking that is going on today under the inclusive and, it is true, sometimes vague term of existentialism. Not that the questions are new. They are as old as the thoughts of men, and as ancient as the tale of Jacob's wrestling with the truth. But they come to us out of the flow of experience and the sea of consciousness in form pertinent to our age, and we had best deal with them just so.

In a series in the SATURDAY EVENING POST a few months ago, Dr. Paul Tillich had an article on *The Lost Dimension in Religion.* In it he held that the lost dimension today is depth. The existential problem is about the depth of inwardness

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which each existent achieves or misses. If the tide of feeling and searching today is on internality, the current of the human mind for several centuries has been on externality. The whole scientific trend has been on objectivity. Science demands that there be no personal equation in the mind's astute severity. Some trace this back to the Greek mind, as concerned with things, while the Hebrew mind was more concerned with persons. But that is carrying it pretty far. And it may be only the egg-head in us that wants to find a classical basis for the newest thought. But with the Age of Enlightenment objectivity brought us many things that mere subjectivity never had.

From Franklin on it brought us the age of electricity. There have been those among us, who in their life span of ninety years have seen the invention of everything from the light bulb and the telephone to radio, television, and radar bouncing wave lengths from the moon. Objectivity has brought us automobiles and motor-boats, atoms and missiles, computers and population statistics, and an R.S.V. Concordance made with an electric brain which sorted out all the references in thirty days. It used to take thirty years to make a concordance.

I confess myself to be a child of this objectivity and realism. But I have also to confess myself as inescapably an heir of that interior view of life without which life all dwindle into pins upon a statistical map, if not numbers in a cell. People are not things; they are people. It took a second touch of the Master's hands upon the blind man's eyes before the objects he first saw as trees walking became truly men.

THERE ARE THOSE who will point out that the Protestant Reformation was an existentialist revolt. It brought out the interior character of religious experience. Martin Luther (1483-1546) said that man becomes a theologian, not by understanding, reading and speculating, but by living, by dying and by being damned." The point in religion was trust in God, not argument about God. Luther did not destroy objectivity; indeed, he promoted the study of the Scriptures. But his great insistence was that salvation comes by faith, an internal commitment to invisible realities of which we are made aware within.

Objectivity asks: Is there a God? Existence asks: What shall I do to relate myself savingly to the total reality for which God is the word? Objectivity asks: Why is there suffering in the world? Existence asks: What shall I do about the suffering I witness and experience, and about the evil in the world and the sin in myself? Luther, and all sound religion, wrestled with these realities.

But the tide of inquiry and revolt moved with strength within the Catholic Church, as well as within the Protestant company. Blaise Pascal (1632-1662) was a genius in physics and mathematics. He invented a calculating machine which he saw was nearer to man than is the animal, but yet lacked life. So he began to look for the meaning of the universe not in things but in persons. He wondered what their place was in a universe that seems to run so blindly it does not notice them. "Who put me here?" he asked. And he wrote, "The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me." The lostness of man and his wretchedness when out of fellowship with God are the anxieties that lead men back to God. In argument with the Pope and the Church he controverted the traditional sources of authority, and left as his most frequently quoted aphorism, "The heart hath reasons that the reason knoweth not of." In many ways he was an existentialist two hundred years before the high priest of that school appeared.

THE CHIEF SOURCE OF the existentialist movement was Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), the "Disturbing Dane," who from his lookout in Denmark prodded and irri-

tated the conventional religious society he saw about him. He was lonely and odd, suffering a broken engagement, due partly to inner conflicts and a sense of special vocation. He led something of a double life—outwardly, he said, as "a frivolous bird" and privately as a "penitent." He attacked the Church in the name of faithfulness to Christ. Neglected while living, by 1936—eight-one years after his death—the English translations of his writings filled twenty volumes. He was full of sarcasm and invective, and like a literary boxer, jabbed and feinted to catch the reader off balance. And always he left with the finger of his truth pointing at "you." Worship, he felt, is full of hypocrisy. A comfortable preacher preaches to a comfortable audience about the glory of sacrifice—and nobody laughs! The more eloquent the utterance on the wonder of the Cross, the more successful the preaching. Thus we make a fool out of the God on Golgotha. Passionately he asked: "How can one become a Christian in Christendom, when Christendom has done away with Christianity?" Objective truth is better than objective falsity; but subjective truth, that which is apprehended and demonstrated inwardly, is more important than either. The important question, he thought, is not: What are Christian beliefs? It is: How can I become a Christian? And to Kierkegaard to become a Christian is to become contemporaneous with Christ. And this is not simply to go back to a historical figure, but to engage in the contemporary struggle of that figure, and to share in the suffering and courage of the Christ of now. This is an offense to mankind. But it is the leap of faith that must be made. It is always a risky venture, wherefore the Christian lives in fear and trembling. The somber Dane was sometimes too bitter in his charge that we are "immune to Christianity." He sometimes forgot the "Good News" of the Gospel. Yet at the last he said, "Even though I have been mistaken on this or that point, nevertheless God is love." This was the conclusion of his haunting hunt for the truth about life in himself and in other selves. It is arresting doctrine which our day deeply needs.

Now there is a whole procession of those who have been a chain of transmission in the last hundred years of this emphasis on inwardness in the search for the life of reality. It is no mark of erudition to know them. And it may be as important for us and for our children to be familiar with them, as to know who will play first base in the spring training season at Bradenton and who won the slalom at Squaw Valley. And if our children are to understand themselves and be saved from the externality of things, and brought into fresh and sweet relations with persons, they should be drawn into this stream of consciousness. A movie actress is said recently to have received an offer of a lead part that would make her famous. She was told only that it was an existentialist role. "What," she exclaimed, "is an existentialist?" With cowboys she was acquainted, but not—or not as yet—with the inner quality of the role she would now be asked to interpret. Anything would be a relief from the action shots we get too much on the screen today. To portray the inner struggle of the psyche to attain significant meaning and enduring existence—that requires a deft turn and a subtle understanding.

One of the names in the transmission of this innerness of life was Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). He said God is dead, and for proof one has only to look at the churches. Their timidity and their mediocrity testify to an inconsequential God. They are the sepulchres of God. And when one looks at how the churches have been overwhelmed by the external forces of society, until they themselves are too often skeletons of ruin, he has to concede that Nietzsche had a moral premonition of what was coming. In answer to the charge that we have killed God, he did not say that we must build more churches, but that we must become gods, if He is to be restored to relevant

authority and power. Now one may take this as adolescent bravura or as piercing human responsibility. But it is better than burying God in the debris of a civilization in ruins.

The soul-searching that has been going on in our own century is instanced in both German and French thought. Martin Heidegger supported the Nazis, and Jean-Paul Sartre fought for the French Underground. Heidegger, by the figure of "the path in the woods," has held that the most fundamental fact about the self is that it is constantly drifting toward nothing. But to accept this is to become a genuine self. Clearly Heidegger is no Christian existentialist, but he is groping for the inner self.

Sartre has been criticized for writing in barrooms by those who do not understand that this is the custom of the French literary set, and that there is often no heat in their apartments. He is in trouble with the Catholic Church because of the non-theistic emphasis of his search for a significant self. He holds that the main question is not whether there is a God, but whether man can be a self that takes responsibility for his own destiny through his own decisions. He ought not to run to God directly or through any intermediary. There is a universal priesthood of unbelievers. Does this run the Protestant view to some illogical conclusion? He has written an existentialist play called *No Exit,* the paralyzing horror of which is that the characters cannot get away from their own selves and the other selves with them. This might just start some soul-searching, if we are going to have to live with these selves forever. That is hell —from which there is no exit.

BUT THERE ARE THREE Christian philosophers who might well be remembered in this tradition of the soul in search of a self: Nicholas Berdyaev (1874-1948), Russian Orthodox; Jacques Maritain, French Catholic; and Paul Tillich, Evangelical and Reformed.

Berdyaev had the distinction of being arrested by both the Czarist and the Communist regimes before he became an *emigre* in Paris. A new and soundly interpretative biography of him by Donald Lowrie, long a YMCA leader in Europe, is just out. Berdyaev cried out with the passion of the Eastern Church for the uniqueness of the self, that is of man, as over against the "thingification" of persons. He criticized both communism and capitalism for their use of persons. Both are guilty of relying on a "labor pool" to do the world's work. He called for a "personal socialism." For twenty-five years as a refugee he spoke compelling words to Christians everywhere, in their search for a true concept of the self.

Jacques Maritain represents a French Catholic position. In his *The Meaning of Contemporary Atheism,* he points out that a serious—not an insolent—atheist may have a greatness and generosity that outstrips the conventional—and inert—believer. Only the saint is more clear-sighted who refuses to accept things as they are, and who rejects all idols, even the atheistic idols of nature and society. He would say that the saint discovers his self in his dedication to the service of the world and finds reality (God) in this service-related-to-others self.

Paul Tillich, coming out of the anti-Nazi faith in Germany, is working out a depth theology, is a Protestant-oriented representative of this movement. When asked some months ago what he felt about other religions, he said he had friends in all of them, but that "We all stand under judgment of the Cross." By which, I take it, he meant that the self that would find itself and something greater than itself to which it can give itself, must always devote itself through sacrifice.

One cannot cover this great field of religious thought without reference to Martin Buber, moving from Austria, through Germany, to Jerusalem in 1938. Profoundly Jewish, though often critical

of organized Judaism, he emphasizes what has become almost a contemporary cliche, the "I-Thou" relationship. "All real living is meeting," he says. I-Thou, to him, are not two words, but one reality out of which the two words come. Our personalities are outgrowths of our relationships. This has profound meaning for family, school, church and society. Neither *I* nor *Thou* can ever become *It.* Above all, the eternal Thou of every life —God—ever confronts us, and offers us self-realization in Him.

Now one could go on, but as in the *Letter to the Hebrews,* time forbids our telling of others who have contributed to this stream of religious insight: Freud and Jaspers, Dawson and Marcel, Heschel and Herberg, Brunner and Bultmann, Barth and the Niebuhrs. Nor is there place here to recite the catalogue of authors, playwrights and artists whom this attempt to evoke the self has touched. T. S. Eliot, the American turned Englishman, who wrote an introduction to a translation of Pascal's *Pensees,* and W. H. Auden, the Englishman turned American, who edited selections from Kierkegaard.

Suffice it only here to say that these men and minds are seeking after not external realism but internal reality. Art, they would say, does not so much reproduce the visible as make the invisible visible. Could we do that in religion, we might again experience the verities of faith.

How then shall we assess this wave of the spirit? We do well to welcome it as restoring an ancient and biblical position. It gives place to the self, the psyche, the soul in the midst of the external world by which we are surrounded, and with which in our recent state of internal unconsciousness we have been almost smothered.

Moreover it offers the hope—the only hope—that we may manage and master the external world. Without this discovery of the self, and without its concern, its courage and its commitment, life is nothing and has no hope. It is but dice rolled in a box. But with the integrity of the self restored, "Modern Man in Search of a Soul" (Freud) will have found himself and been restored to his place of immortal importance.

The soul of man needs to be shaken, as was the soul of Jacob when he wrestled with the angel of his other self. Religious experience in the Christian dimension is not merely that the self lays hold on something but that something has grasped the self and shaken it—perhaps till it is gasping and somewhat lamed for life—but sent it on its way with a blessing wherewith it will be blessed and be a blessing forever.

THE QUARTERLY FORUM

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR MINISTERS

by HAROLD G. NEWSHAM*

1. Whether thy sermon be about Time or Eternity it shall also be about twenty minutes.

2. If thou art preaching about heaven, nevertheless be not above the heads of thy flock.

3. Though thy discourse may be upon "the still small voice" yet shalt thou cause thy voice to be heard throughout the synagogue, yea even by those who say they are not deaf and who always abide in the furthermost seats.

4. Should it come to pass that one of thy sheep saith unto thee thy discourse was a good discourse, thou shalt perceive this meaneth it was good for divers other sheep to whom thy flatterer hopeth thy medicine may be profitable.

5. When thou art in thy pulpit thou shalt give all thy mind and soul and strength to worship. But it is required of thee also that thou shalt observe the absence of the least of thy little ones and the presence of the most casual of thine occasional ones.

6. When thou takest unto thee a wife, choose for thyself one who can do for thee and for thy household in her spare time all those things that most of the women in the flock do declare take their whole time.

7. When shepherds from afar, and whose fame is great, visit thy town or city, nevertheless thou shalt prepare thy sermon for the Sabbath day with all diligence even though thou knowest well that only a small number of thy sheep will attend thine own sanctuary. Moreover, thou shalt heartily commend the prudence of the many who wandered from thy fold.

8. Thou shalt be so gifted with telepathy as to know when any of thy flock are afflicted with the liver, the housemaid's knee, the lockjaw or, perchance, the spleen. Be ye not as the vet. or doctor who have no understanding, but must needs be told of such afflictions by telephone, or, it may be, by letter.

9. Remember the climate of thy land that it is strange. For it can ever be too cold or too hot, too wet or too dry,too windy or too calm, for some of thy sheep to seek the sheepfold. Moreover it can be the day after a birthday or the day before a journey, or peradventure kinsmen come. In all these things thou shalt never seem a doubter.

10. Though thou knowest in thine heart the Creed of the Apostles and divers historic Confessions of the Faith, thou shalt understand that the most important article of thy people's faith is not written therein, but is this; that the days worthy of being called good, and the preachers worthy of being called giants, ceased to be before thou wert installed to the pastorate. Howbeit thou mayest comfort thyself with the hope that the present, if thou art faithful, will become some tomorrow's shining yesterday.

* Minister Emeritus, Center Church, Hartford, Conn.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR A CONGREGATION

Hear the word of one of thy servants read to the congregation of the First Congregational Church of Fairport, New York, convened at its house of worship on Church Street, at the Second Hour of the First Watch, on the 14th day of the Second Month in the year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty.

GREETINGS:

It was in that era of the atom and hydrogen bombs, when the Eisenhower dynasty was drawing to a close; when the country was being besieged with such burning questions as Summit Conferences, Cold Wars, the outfitting of space and lunar expeditions; when STRIKES and Racial misunderstandings were rampant.

In these troublesome days it came to pass in the COUNTY of MONROE in the village of Fairport, hard by the great metropolis of ROCHESTER, in the EMPIRE state of New York, that the Word of the Lord came to a certain Church saying, "Arise from thy spiritual indolence, and better thyself even unto the calling of a minister, to shepherd thy flock, for the sheep are being neglected, and the lambs are not fed, and the big rams (often known as TRUSTEES and DEACONS) are becoming indifferent and are losing sight of their ecclesiastical responsibilities.

And behold! This Church heard and heeded the word of admonition, and they made haste after the manner of the tribe called CONGREGATIONALISTS, and found a man by the name of PILLSBURY in the Mass. Bay area, in the city of Melrose.

Having made certain that they were not offering too large a salary, a call was extended to the man, and after due consideration and conference and counting not the recompense of reward, but seeing only wide and effectual doors of opportunity open, through which the constraint of the love of Christ bade him enter—he accepted.

It came to pass in due time that this Church after careful consideration, and an adequate period of TRIAL, gave ear to the Word of the Lord again a second time, and called together some of the wise and mighty men of the surrounding country to convene in a Service of Recognition, and to give approval to the fitness of this man as a prophet, priest, and servant of the Most High, and to set their seal of approval on him, and welcome him into the regular order of the MINISTERS of the GENESEE ASSOCIATION.

So, the good men and kind prophets, priests and ecclesiastics, men eminently worthy, came to give their Godspeed to this new venture. They gave their sincere blessing and approval, striking their beardless chins with great satisfaction, and with one accord agreed that the choice was a good one, both on the part of the Church and the minister.

Now, it so happened that a certain member of the order of the Clergy had been asked to give the CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE, which is one of the things that usually happens in such a service, if that service is to fulfill its function, and being at his wits end to know what and how to charge this people, he betook himself to deep meditation, and there appeared unto him a vision, and he beheld an outline of a decalogue, not unlike the TEN COMMANDMENTS committed unto Moses on the Mount. The man was so impressed that he decided to bring the words of the vision and make them the CHARGE TO THE CHURCH.

1. Thou shalt not have before thee any other minister than Leonard H. Pillsbury. Thou shalt not keep looking back, thinking of those eloquent men of the past who have served thee before this time; such as Gruman, Marr, Ficken, etc. They have done their work and departed to

*Adapted by John A. Leach, from an outline by Nelson C. Drier.

what THEY thought were greener pastures. But be thou loyal to thy present minister. The glory of the Church is not in the past but the future. Look not back. Remember Lot's Wife!"

3. Thou shalt not make for thyself any mental image of a minister in some other city whose star flickers with particular brightness in the sky of eloquence or *organization,* or who may be known as a SPELL-BINDER or a GO-GETTER. Beware of the folly of thinking that variety is the spice of a CHURCH's ministry. To thine own minister BE TRUE. There is none other like him in all the land. Remember that if thou goest out flirting with another minister he may turn out to be a wolf in sheep's clothing.

4. Thou shalt not take the name of thy pastor in vain. If thou callest him Mr. Pillsbury or introduce him as the Rev'd Leonard H. Pillsbury, thou doest well, but call him NOT, REV'D PILLSBURY or the wrath of the State Sup't will surely descend upon you, for there is no such animal as "REV'D PILLSBURY." Neither shalt thou profane his name by saying, "LET LEN DO IT" for thou hast called him to a COOPERATIVE service, and if thou dost allow the preacher to pull the chariot ALONE, while you hang on behind, it would not be improper for the preacher to become balky.

5. "Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it Holy," for it is written, that "in six days thou shalt labor and do all thy work." This admonition includes MOWING THE LAWN, RAKING LEAVES, and the family REUNIONS and PICNICS that in some REMOTE places interfere with attendance upon WORSHIP, for thy minister needeth the encouragement that cometh by the practice which causes thyself to fill 18 inches of pew space every Sunday morning. Thou shall not allow the reading of POGO, BLONDIE, Lil Abner and the SUNDAY SPORT SUPPLEMENT to keep thee from the House of God.

6. When thou enterest the SANCTUARY thou shalt be quiet and reverent and refrain from conversation, whether thou sittest in the *choir* or elsewhere. Thou shalt bow thyself and offer a prayer for THYSELF, THY NEIGHBOR and the one who ministers, that on thy departure thou wilt be refreshed in BODY, MIND and spirit, regardless of the sermon.

5. Thou shalt honor thy minister & his wife by offering them high friendship. Thou shalt pay the salary of thy minister when it is due, for in so doing, his financial obligations to the butcher, baker and electric light maker may be taken care of promptly.

Thou shalt be appreciative when the minister's wife appears in a NEW OUTFIT even if it looks better than your own, and thou shalt not be too perturbed if she indulges her vanity by buying a new bonnet occasionally, even tho it be EASTERTIDE. Thou shalt honor thy minister with the little cares & courtesies that sweeten life, and remember constantly that he will do his work more effectively if he can feel the buoyancy that comes by jingling a few sheckels in one's pocket. In honoring thy minister thou doest honor to the CHURCH and to HIM who loved the CHURCH and gave *his* life for that which the CHURCH represents.

6. Thou shalt not kill the spiritual enthusiasm of thy minister by saying to him at the close of the SUNDAY GATHERING, "That was a nice talk." Know ye that a sermon is *not* an intellectual *lollipop!* Be truthful, and if thou canst say a sincere word of appreciation, *let it be,* "THAT SERMON HELPED ME." or "I shall be a better man because of that sermon." Thereby the minister will have the feeling of great reward. *Always* be ready with thy right hand in warm handclasp both for the good of thy minister, and all the CHURCH.

7. Thou shalt not commit the sin of sympathizing *too* much with thy minister, saying, "The poor man is working too hard; he needs an extra vacation." The recording angel is still waiting to fill the first book with the names of those who kill themselves with work. Remember that more people RUST out than wear

out, and in CHURCH relationships that applies to members as often as to their ministers. If some blue-eyed d a m s e l threatens to shed tears lest he crash the pearly gates before his appointed time, he will say to her, "Weep not for me, O Daughter of Zion, but for thyself. Knowest thou not that the servants of JEHOVAH thrive in body and soul on *hard work?*"

8. Thou shalt not steal thy minister's time or anything else that rightfully belongs to him. Let it be known that the minister must have uninterrupted hours for study if he is to bring fresh food for thought to his congregation every Sunday morning. If thou rob him of these precious hours thou wilt surely reap thy reward in sermons unworthy of his best efforts. BEWARE, lest thou burden thy minister with time and energy consuming chores, that might better be done by an errand boy. Appoint to the DEACONS their rightful duties of DEEKING and may you have TRUSTED Trustees who will courageously follow their minister's highest dreams and visions.

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy pastor by parading his shortcomings before the world. Nor shalt thou be a PURVEYOR of *unholy* gossip that will blight thy CHURCH. If thou are NOT in full sympathy with thy minister in all he says and does do not stab him in the back with cruel criticism, nor absent thyself from the sanctuary, nor cut down thy subscription. Be proud of him for having a mind of his own. If a misunderstanding arises go to him in a fraternal manner and thou wilt find him to be an understanding and Christian gentleman. If at sometime in the dim and distant future a change is desired he will speak to thee about it, or thou canst confer with him, but when things come to such a pass, refrain from calling thy STATE SUP'T to pull thy chestnuts out of the fire, for his function is that of a COUNSELLOR and not merely a trouble shooter.

10. Thou shalt not covet the time and strength of thy pastor's wife, and thou shalt remember that she has her own house to keep in order, and that the telephone at the parsonage rings innumerably more times than that in the average home. When tempted to ask the wife of a minister to help cook a CHURCH dinner or wash the dishes thereafter, remember the cares of the management of her household, in addition to the management of her husband, which must be constantly on her hands and heart. Be thou confident that thy good minister's wife will do more than her share, but she should not be expected to be the clean-up squad for all the jobs in the parish that do not look attractive to others.

The voice of one of thy servants hath spoken. The words d e c l a r e d in this CHARGE to this CONGREGATION were given in LOVE of Christian fellowship, to the end that the cause of The Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ may prosper under the ministerial leadership of one LEONARD H. PILLSBURY. SELAH!

ear Editor:
I am seldom moved sufficiently to write "letter to the editor" either in com-endation or criticism but I must con-ss to a sense of shock and sorrow to id the novel *Lolita,* recommended as a ry praiseworthy subject for a pastor's rmon to a Christian congregation. (*The odern Novel in Preaching,* summer is-e). It strikes me as a glaring example the moral slump that has corrupted r generation that a novel which is nned in France(!) should be made the hicle of a sermon to a mixed congrega-n. If this is the spiritual food that we el compelled to serve to our people I ar the Church itself is beyond redemp-n.

Yours Sincerely
PAUL M. SCHROEDER
Rochester, N. Y.

ear Editor:
This Presbyterian pastor is stimulated d helped by THE MINISTER'S QUAR-RLY, but never more than by your ex-llent summer issue.

Thank you so very much
FREDERICK W. CROPP
San Marino, Calif.

ear Editor:
The summer issue of the MINISTER'S UARTERLY is superb. Congratulations such features as *Lament of a Psycho-alyst's Wife* and *The Minister's In-grity,* by John R. Scotford.
I particularly appreciated Alfred Sch-alz' *One Week.* Behind the scenes in is "diary" is a man of real balance and nsitivity. His remarkable ability to carry heavy work load and still find time to ke a nap and play the piano is hearten-g to us who cannot let go of the handle the plow for even an hour. If Jesus as able to take a nap while crossing the a in a storm, a minister ought to be le to do likewise.
I, for one, liked Mr. Schmalz' honesty.

Sincerely,
C. E. SILL
Pleasant Hill, Calif.

NEXT SUMMER IN ENGLAND

All arrangements will by this time be complete, we hope, for the exchanges it has been possible to effect between ministers in the United States and ministers in Great Britain for the summer of 1961. We greatly appreciate the wonderful response there was to the little article about these exchanges which appeared in the MINISTER'S QUARTERLY. The only unhappy result has been that there were so many more inquiries from the United States side than we have applications from England that many have had to be disappointed.

All those for whom no arrangements have been made for 1961 have been asked if they wish now to be listed for 1962. Will any others who are interested in the possibility of an exchange pastorate for 1962 please get in touch with Mr. Guptill in the early future? These exchanges are of pastoral duties and parsonages for a period of two or three months and are effected on a basis of pooled and divided salaries.

The International Congregational Council has been also very happy to have arranged this last summer a considerable number of preaching appointments for United States ministers visiting Great Britain. These were mostly made with our largest and best churches. Unhappily nearly 75% of all the arrangements made were subsequently cancelled by these ministers and at times which made it quite difficult for the churches then to get the quality of summer supply they reasonably wanted. The reasons for the cancellations were all valid and good, but it is to be feared that the possibility of like arrangements for United States visitors in the future has been considerably embarrassed. We shall be very happy indeed to try to obtain preaching engagements next summer, but please do not ask until you are sure of your schedule.

RALPH F. G. CALDER, *Minister*
International Congregational Council

Fathers and Brethren:

My concern in this writing is ministers and happiness.

I know, happiness is a secular word, and besides it's likely to be sinful to be happy. Our temptation is to be seduced by the pursuit of happiness. We are disciples of a "man of sorrows, acquainted with grief." Happiness is indeed sometimes a result of compromises with the Devil.

Yet, I am convinced that happiness is not always against the law for a Christian. We are disciples also of One who said, after he had told us all about holy love, "These things I have told you that my joy might be in you, and that your joy might be full."

I guess during the past two years in personal correspondence and face to face conversation I must have had first-hand encounter with 1,200 ministers. Even after this immersion in clerical company I have to confess that ministers are my favorite people. And too many of them are not really happy in their work. Not very many, but too many.

Many things have been pointed out as causes of this discontent: Uncertainty about his "role," low salaries (don't forget that one!), disillusionment with church people, doubts as to the relevancy of the gospel to today's world, cynicism directed at the "institutional church," the pressures of confusing and competing demands upon his time, and many others.

It is not my purpose to give a quick answer here to the question, "How to be happy though ordained." I'm sure every pastor who reads the QUARTERLY has at least one or two good sermons that could be bent to fulfill this need. What I would like to do is make an observation.

There are many ministers who still find great joy in the age-old pastoral functions: preaching, conduct of worship, and pastoral care (both the "feed my sheep" pastoral care and the "bear rule in Christ's Church" pastoral care). When they stand in the pulpit or at the Lord's table they are excited the way the engineer of a great locomotive or the captain of a ship is excited about his work. As they sit in the study or in the empty meetinghouse preparing mind and spirit for the coming test they are like astronauts getting ready for the count-down. As they go about their parishes to comfort or to admonish they feel the urgency of the General's couriers in wartime. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel," is their word, too, and as they do the tasks the ordained have done since the days of Timothy they find the fulfillment of a deep inner compulsion. These are happy people in the sense that *happy* and *blessed* are synonymous.

There are other ministers who have come to believe that the ancient offices are no longer worth spending a life at. These turn to other tasks to find their fulfillment, tasks undeniably important and creative: civic and political action, personal counselling "in depth," teaching, organizational administration, small group cultivation. But if they have turned to these tasks to fill the void created by loss of faith in the validity of preaching, conduct of worship, and pastoral care they usually find themselves frustrated and unhappy. The old tasks still have to be done, and to the congregation they will always be of primary importance.

Contentment in the ministry correlates with emphasis. If the traditional offices are primary it is amazing how many other activities may grow up out of them. Some of our best counsellors and teachers are those whose first love is preaching. The church where there are more small study groups than any other in our largest conference owes their origin to the inspiration of good sermons. If a man *must* be a pastor it is astounding how many other things he can be, too, and still be happy. But if he becomes a pastor as a means to other ends the chances of disappointment run high.

I suspect there is little anybody can do about the kind of minister he is. But I am sure as long as there is a Church men will be called to preach, to lead in worship, and to "tend the flock of God." May their tribe increase!

Fraternally yours,

NATHANAEL M. GUPTILL